



HOW TO...

Edit photos in Paint

Don't let a couple of blemishes spoil an otherwise beautiful photograph of your loved one. You can make your pictures perfect using the simple editing facilities in Paint, as Jennifer Bagley explains

Family and friends are probably always emailing you photos, and when you get films of your own pictures processed, you'll be offered the chance to put them on CD. So even if you don't have a digital camera, you're likely to have loads of photos on your computer.

The great thing about digital images is you can edit them yourself, and best of all you don't need to buy new software to do it. Windows comes with a simple image-editing program called Paint. This doesn't have all the same tools as a fully featured program, but it is fine for basic needs. To find it, click on the Start button, and go to Programs, Accessories, Paint.

1 Open your photo. Go to File, Open. Our test picture is on its side, so the first thing we need to do is rotate it. Click on the Image menu and select Flip/Rotate. There are three options in the dialog box that appears. The first two flip the image; if, for example, you want your subject to be facing left instead of right, then select Flip Horizontal. If you want to turn them upside down, choose Flip Vertical. We want Rotate Angle. Select an angle of 90° and click OK.

2 There's a blemish on the forehead of the subject in our photo that we'd like to remove. Paint doesn't have anything as

sophisticated as a clone tool, but you can do basic touching-up using the Paste feature. We need to make the viewable area as large as possible. From the View menu select Zoom then Large Size. Alternatively, select Custom. In the dialog box that appears there are several magnification options.

3 When it's large enough, scroll to the part of the picture that contains the blemish you wish to remove. Click on the Select tool on the left-hand toolbar. It has an outline of a dotted square. This, as the icon would suggest, selects a square shaped area. To pick out a more unusual shape, use the Free Form Select tool next to the Select tool. It has the outline of a dotted star.

Once you've decided on your tool, move to an area that most closely matches the area you want to remove. Click once and, holding the mouse button down, drag to draw a dotted line around the area you want to select. To help make a more exact selection, switch on the grid. Go to the View menu, select Zoom then Show Grid.

4 As the grid obscures the colour of the image, you may want to turn it off for the second part of this operation. Select Copy from the Edit menu. Click on the bottom of the two coloured icons in the left-hand toolbar. This gives your selection a transparent background,

which is essential if you want it to fit seamlessly into the current image. Then select Paste from the Edit menu.

5 As you can see, the pasted area appears in the top left-hand corner of the current image. It's not particularly useful there, so we need to move it. Hover the cursor over the area until it turns into a four-headed arrow. Then click and, holding the mouse button down, drag it into place. To see if it has worked, return the picture to normal size using that option from the View, Zoom menu.

6 You can now liven the photo up using some text. A caption works well if you're emailing the image or using it in artwork such as a greeting card. Click on the Text button in the left-hand toolbar. It has an icon of a capital letter A. Click on the part of the photo where you'd like the text to appear and, holding the mouse button down, drag out the text box. The text toolbar will appear. From this, you can select the font and font size and whether you would like the text to be bold. By default, text appears black. As we have a black background, this won't work in our photo. To change the colour of the text, highlight the words then click on the colour you want from the swatches at the bottom of the screen.

